

WHITE HOUSE DINNERS

They Are Not as Brilliant or as Frequent as of Old.

IN THE DAYS GONE BY

Some Anecdotes About the State Functions and the Guests During Several Administrations—The Mansion Was Modeled After a Duke's Palace, Baronial Appearance of Interior.

State dinners, given at intervals during the sessions of Congress, were long exacted by custom of the Presidents of the Republic, and while they have not been as frequent of late years as formerly, it is not officially announced that there is to be no more of this form of hospitality.

The affairs of a Chief Executive, like those of the common people, must be expected to govern the degree of his sociability at least in a measure—and for one and another reason the custom has at times lapsed into a memory.

During almost the whole of President Lincoln's term it was "more honored in the breach than the observance," for obvious reasons, but President Johnson restored the program more or less elaborately, and under President Grant it was a prominent feature of life at the White House.

"Steward Melah," an Italian noted for his high associations in that relation and with an established record, was in the Grant regime employed to look after the details of the President's state dinners—a high-toned official he was, whose regretful order of dismissal when called upon to "set" the table for such occasions with the limited supply of silver to which the establishment was reduced.

TWENTY-NINE COURSES.

A description of one of the most noteworthy of President Grant's dinners comes down to the present day with much minuteness. It consisted of twenty-nine courses. The first of soup, of course, but such soup as "Frog" Melah only could supply. It was said to be composed of a "French vegetable," a combination of French vegetables, it may have been, and was described by one so fortunate as to have been a guest on the occasion as "a little smoother than peacock's brains, but not quite so exquisitely flavored as a dish of nightingale's tongue; and no man or woman was ever able to obtain the steward's recipe for the making of the incomparable soup."

Following the soup came a French croquette of meat, and the third course consisted of a hot fowl, flanked on each side by potatoes the size of a walnut, with plenty of mushrooms to keep them company.

Through sheer want of words for proper expression of ideas of an ideal feast, the description of the edibles closed with an apology, preceded by the observation that "the next course was dainty in the extreme. It was made up entirely of the luscious legs of partridges and baptized by a French name entirely beyond comprehension."

The dessert is, however, given a touching up, and it is also stated that "the meridian or noon of the feast was marked by the guests being served beautifully with frozen punch." Wine was "served about every third course."

The dessert was "inaugurated by the destruction of a rice pudding—such a pudding as would make our great grandmothers clap their hands in joy, and no plebeian pie or pastry was permitted to keep it company."

After the pudding came the more ordinary variety of the species dessert, the whole concluding with ice cream, coffee, and chocolate, in the order named. Conversation at a state dinner cannot

be general, if conforming to the rules of etiquette established by long usage. The quality of the conversation must depend altogether upon the kind of people who take part.

It is in the White House annals that one, Mike Walsh, once horrified Mrs. Franklin Pierce on a State occasion by confidentially communicating to her the circumstances that attended his "going a fishing on Sunday." Also that a moderate congressman once filled the spaces between the mouthfuls by telling his next neighbor, a lady, of the exact articles of diet his public hostess consumed.

He was not at all inclined to "French dishes," but he was "fond of pork and beans, as well as ice cream and penicils."

On one occasion, at a rare affair in the state dinner line, a novice in the etiquette of such august assemblages, passed up his plate for "a little more of that you brought me the last time, please." He had no objection to making the second demand, but for the life of him he couldn't muster the courage to undertake the production of the name.

He had heard it, and it might have meant chicken, for all he knew, but his ignorance of the French name was not exposed.

This recalls that when an accomplished young American lady once had the honor to dine with the Czar of Russia, her lack of instruction in the etiquette of the royal occasion caused her innumerable mortification. When the grapes were passed she took an entire bunch, in the hearty American way, but the others guests used the little gold knife to remove a single grape each. Had a Russian daimler helped herself at an American table to a whole chicken the error would have been the same.

In order to show courtesy to all and offend none, it is necessary for a President, who observes the custom to give quite a number of these entertainments during the Congressional presence in town. The dinners cost from three hundred to fifteen hundred dollars, according to the quality of the guests, and the expense is a draft upon the President's private purse. The average amount disbursed is probably \$700.

Those invited include members of both Houses of Congress, the Cabinet officers, the diplomatic corps and occasional distinguished visitors from abroad.

The state dining-room at the White House is a handsomely appointed apartment and inviting at all times, but when refurnished, as it is at intervals, as well as repapered and freshly painted and adorned by the artistic touch of the decorator, it presents an appearance that may be described as regal. A long table, rounded at the ends, extends through the middle of the room, and at this board thirty-six may be seated, and yet leave room for the servants to perform their duties satisfactorily.

As once described by a feminine guest, "New mirrors and chandeliers have been put in, but the upholstering, carpets and papering seem to have descended from a regime of a quarter of a century ago."

"The exquisite taste of Martha Patterson is seen on the daintily tinted walls, the figures of the carpet so nicely adjusted to the size of the room, the dark green satin damask at the windows, and the quaint chairs, under her supervision arranged to match."

"A clock, as ancient as the days of Madison, adorns one of the marble mantels, while hydra-headed candlesticks, green with age, descended from nobody knows whose brief reign, grace the other. With the exception of a pair of modern mahogany sideboards, the furniture seems to have belonged to the era of Washington or Jefferson, it is so old and so homely."

The White House was modeled after the palace of the Duke of Lancaster, and the construction of another building to be set aside as the house of his family.

Should this be done, or whether or not, the President's mission small and inadequate as it is, will probably, ere long,

be transformed, as, either by new construction or reconstruction some provision should, and doubtless will, be soon made for the greater comfort of the household.

In that event, future state dinners will, in all probability, be given in a hall that is not baronial in appearance, but in all respects modeled after a distinctly American style of architecture.

MOHAMMED'S DESCENDANT.

The Late Sherief of Wazan Renowned

Chicago Inter-Ocean.

A picturesque figure has passed away by the death of the young sherief of Wazan, Sultan-Hadje-Arabi, or Mohi Ali, was the eldest son of the once powerful sherief of Wazan, Muh-Sid-Hadje-Arabi-Sahann, who died three years ago, and who formerly exercised an enormous religious influence over all the tribes of Morocco. Mohi Ali's mother, was an English woman, but, through his father, he was the nearest descendant of the prophet, and was consequently, like his father, regarded with much veneration by the Moslems throughout northwest Africa. His father, shortly before his death, became a French subject, and Mohi Ali was consequently also of French nationality.

A party of tourists, including an artist, visited Wazan and this distinguished Arab two months ago. Contrary to the highly colored pictures of Oriental luxury and magnificence which they had been led to expect, the party passed through a garden, flower beds and sandal paths to a long, low, white portico, with marble columns. In the middle of the portico was a cedar folding door, through which they were ushered into a narrow chamber, with a ceiling of bare rafters.

The chamber was hung with half-drawn curtains, and in the center compartment reclined Mohi Ali. He was dressed in a blue sultan and a silk hat, as white as snow. When the party entered he was cutting pieces of cardboard with a pair of scissors. He looked about thirty years of age.

He had a swarthy complexion, very dark eyes, heavy eyelids, thick lips and a rather prominent, aquiline nose. There was a proud and refined expression on his pleasant face, and he seemed to wear an air of polite disdain, languor and kindly feeling. Chairs were brought for the European visitors and tea was served. The sherief examined some sketches made by the artist of the company and then invited them to squat on his divan. Some conversation was carried on through an interpreter, and a present was made to the chief of the party.

After the visit was over Mr. Montard's companions could not help expressing surprise at the lateness of the visit, the poverty of the carpets, and the Spartan simplicity of the residence of the "pope of Morocco." The fact was, the poor sherief was in want of money, owing to the extravagance of his late father. All the costly furniture and rich appointments of the place had been converted into hard cash in order to pay the family debts.

There is a touch of sadness in the picture of the young sherief of Wazan, the last lineal descendant of Mohammed, being forced, like a penniless peasant, to patch his knickerbockers, and strip his very doors of their gold panels to pay the debts of an epicurean and ease-loving parent. The fact that the young man's mother was an English lady lends an added interest to the picturesque but pathetic figure who has just passed away from the land of his fathers and the believers in his great ancestor.

One of Them.

Lazibones—Yes, sir; our college has turned out some great men.

Crustie—I suppose you are one of them.

Lazibones—Well, the college didn't turn me out exactly, but I was turned out of college, just the same—Philadelphia Record.

Kokomo, Ind., is the home of a peculiarly afflicted family. The husband and wife are both blind, the latter being also a helpless cripple, the accident that produced blindness likewise depriving her of the use of her arms. Their blind girl is also blind; thus the entire household is sightless. The husband sells candy on the streets. Their home is as neat and clean as the tightest housekeeper with good eyes could keep it.—Chicago Inter-Ocean.

Hardman Pianos.

\$1,200 Hardman Baby Grand, in San Domingo Mahogany, 1800.

\$700.

\$550 Hardman Cabinet Grand, in Rosewood, for

\$400.

\$700 Hardman Upright Cabinet Grand, in San Domingo Mahogany, for

\$475.

\$600 Hardman Cabinet Grand, in Rosewood, for

\$375.

\$700 Hardman Cabinet Grand, in Antique Oak, for

\$475.

\$650 Hardman Cabinet Grand, handsomely carved, in Rosewood, for

\$450.

Whitney Piano.

\$600 Whitney Upright Cabinet Grand, in Mahogany, for

\$250.

Brown & Simpson.

\$600 Upright Cabinet Grand, in Mahogany, for

\$300.

\$600 Upright Cabinet Grand, in Oak, for

\$300.

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\$600 Hinze Upright, in Antique Oak

\$225.

Ernst Gabler Piano.

Slightly used, square, carved legs, 7 1/2 Octaves, Rosewood, \$200 Piano for

\$150.

Standard Pianos

\$ 500 Standard, Upright, in Mahogany and Rosewood, with the famous lock pedals.

\$225.

Hallett & Davis Piano.

Slightly used, square, 7 1/2 Octaves, Rosewood case, carved legs, a \$600 Piano for

\$175.

Kimball Pianos.

\$600 Kimball Cabinet Grand, in Antique Oak, for

\$400.

\$750 Kimball Cabinet Grand, in Mahogany, for

\$450.

Gildemeester & Kroeger.

\$550 Gildemeester & Kroeger Cabinet Grand, in Mahogany, for

\$500.

\$1,200 Gildemeester & Kroeger Baby Grand, in Rosewood, for

\$800.

\$600 Gildemeester & Kroeger Cabinet Grand, in Circassian Walnut, for

\$400.

\$600 Gildemeester & Kroeger Cabinet Grand, in Circassian Walnut, for

\$550.

\$550 Gildemeester & Kroeger Cabinet Grand, in Mahogany, for

\$475.

Krell Pianos.

\$600 Krell Upright Cabinet Grand, in Mahogany or Oak, for

\$300.

Brown & Simpson.

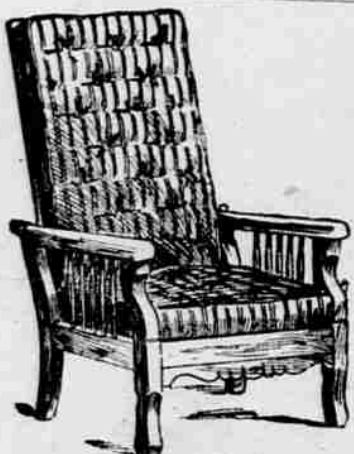
\$600 Upright Cabinet Grand, in Walnut, for

\$300.

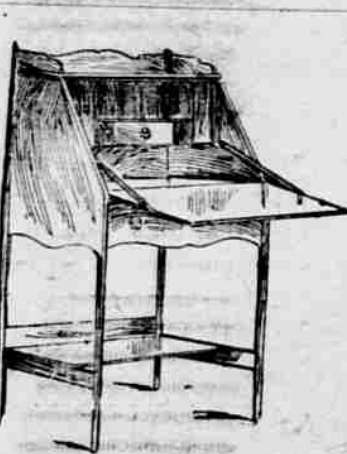
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Fine Mahogany Finish Table, 30-inch top, neatly carved. \$3.95



Tabourette-Polished Quartered Oak or Mahogany finish. Highly carved. \$2.95



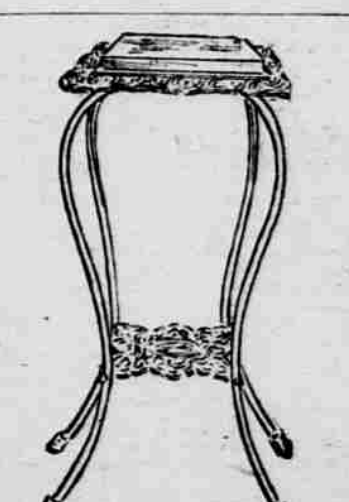
Cheffonier, Polished Oak, large, 5 small drawers, Hat Box. \$6.85



Ladies' Toilette Table, White Enamel, Oak, Mahogany, Cherry Birch, French. \$12.50 UP.



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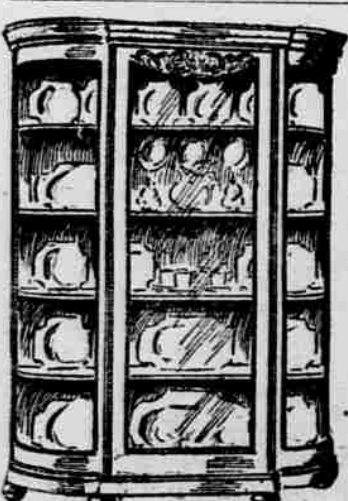


Onyx Table. \$3.65

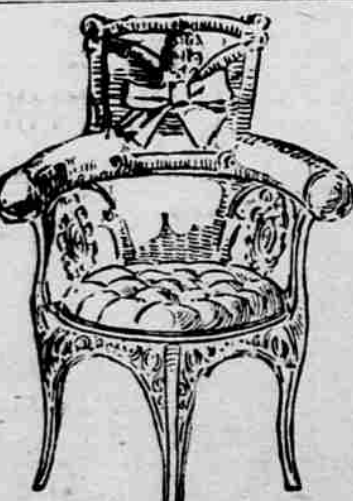
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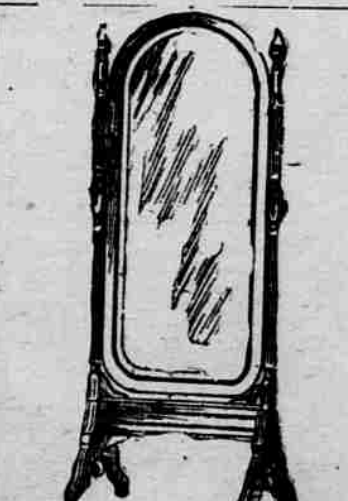
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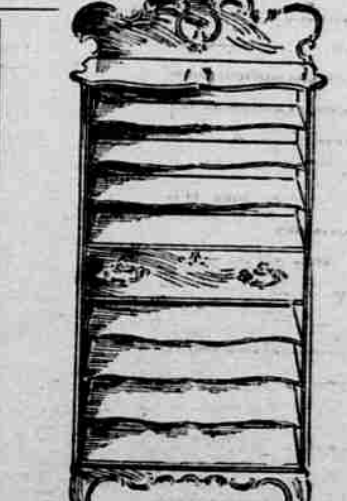
Combination Book Case and Oak Cherry Birch and Mahogany—Others up to \$25.



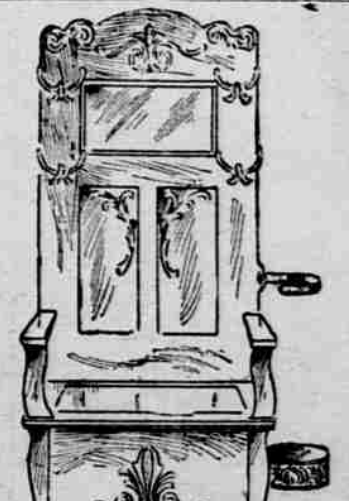
White Enamel Dressers, also Birch Quartered Oak, solid Mahogany and Mahogany finish. A splendid line at very low prices.



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